Propertymark

Shona Robison MSP

Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing & Local Government

Scottish Government

St Andrew’s House

Regent Road

Edinburgh

EH1 3DG

Arbon House, 6 Tournament Court

Edgehill Drive

Warwick

CV34 6LG

8 September 2022

Dear Shona Robison,

**Re: Moratorium on evictions and rent freeze**

As the CEO of Propertymark, I am writing on behalf of our members to seek clarification on the recent announcement from the Scottish Government on rent freezes and a moratorium of evictions until at least 31 March 2023.

Propertymark is the UK’s leading professional body of property agents, with over 18,000 members. We have a strong belief that a significant proportion of tenants will interpret a rent freeze as an instruction not to pay rent. As a result, letting agents fear there will be more rent arrears, evictions, and cases for the First-Tier Tribunal after the end of March 2023.

Throughout the Coronavirus pandemic and beyond letting agents have worked hard with tenants and landlords to maintain tenancies and keep people in their homes. Consequently, it’s unfair to suggest letting agents and their landlords will be routinely increasing rents at a time when many tenants are facing a further strain on their finances. All parties will need to continue to work together, and the Scottish Government should be doing more to encourage this and not only provide support to tenants but letting agents and landlords as well.

We understand that the announcements have been made as an emergency response to the current cost of living and energy crisis, however, we want to see the evidence that landlords are increasing rents to unsustainable levels beyond increases to their own rising costs. Landlords face the same rising costs as tenants as well as increases in mortgage interest rates and maintaining properties at the same rate of rent will be unaffordable for many.

Propertymark is also concerned that these new temporary protections will become permanent as has been the case with other measures introduced during the pandemic. We are therefore seeking assurances that the Scottish Government will ensure that these measures will be temporary and a freeze on the cost of rent and a moratorium on evictions will not return once the legislation lapses next year.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

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**Nathan Emerson**

**Chief Executive Officer**

**Propertymark**